

Serial No.: 09/548,322
Atty. Docket No.: 110768.00102

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-43. (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) A method for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the method comprising determining whether the sender address exists at an authorized mailhost for a domain of the sender address without sending an electronic mail message to the sender address, and accepting the electronic message if the sender address exists.

45. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 44, wherein the step of determining whether the sender address exists comprises establishing a test connection to ~~an~~ the authorized mailhost for the sender address, sending a test protocol transaction specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and determining if the authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the sender address as a recipient.

46. (canceled)

47. (previously presented) A method for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the method comprising sending to the remote host a protocol transaction that might be used to forward

Serial No.: 09/548,322
Atty. Docket No.: 110768.00102

mail from an unknown origin, monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the protocol transaction, and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the protocol transaction.

48. (previously presented) A method for verifying an e-mail address having a domain, the method comprising sending a first test transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the domain, and classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

49. (currently amended) The method of claim 44 48, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

50. (currently amended) The method of claim 44 48, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain of the sender address.

51. (previously presented) The method of claim 48, further comprising sending to the authorized mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction, and classifying the e-mail address as indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and the second test transaction.

52. (previously presented) The method of claim 44, further comprising not accepting the electronic message if the sender address is determined not to exist.

Serial No.: 09/548,322
Atty. Docket No.: 110768.00102

53. (canceled)

54. (previously presented) The method of claim 47, further comprising the step of accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the protocol transaction.

55. (previously presented) The method of claim 48, further comprising classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

56. (previously presented) The method of claim 48, further comprising not accepting electronic messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

57. (previously presented) The method of claim 48, further comprising rejecting forged e-mail addresses submitted to a web site.

58. (currently amended) A system for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the system comprising an address verification filter determining whether the sender address exists at an authorized mailhost for a domain of the sender address without sending an electronic mail message to the sender address, and accepting the electronic message if the sender address exists.

59. (previously presented) The system of claim 58, said address verification filter not accepting the electronic message if the sender address is determined not to exist.

60. (currently amended) The system of claim 58, said address verification filter establishing a test connection from said system to an authorized mailhost for the sender

Serial No.: 09/548,322
Atty. Docket No.: 110768.00102

address, sending a test protocol transaction specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and determining if the authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the sender address as a recipient.

61. (canceled)

62. (canceled)

63. (previously presented) A system for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the system comprising an address verification filter sending to the remote host a protocol transaction that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin, monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the protocol transaction, and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the protocol transaction.

64. (previously presented) The system of claim 63, said address verification filter accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the protocol transaction.

65. (previously presented) A system for verifying an e-mail address having a domain, the system comprising an address verifier sending a first test transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the domain, and classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

Serial No.: 09/548,322
Atty. Docket No.: 110768.00102

66. (previously presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

67. (previously presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain.

68. (previously presented) The system of claim 65, wherein the address verifier comprises an address verification filter that selectively accepts electronic messages having e-mail addresses.

69. (previously presented) The system of claim 68, said address verifier not accepting electronic messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

70. (previously presented) The system of claim 65, wherein said address verifier rejects forged e-mail addresses submitted to a web site.

71. (previously presented) The system of claim 65, said address verifier classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

72. (previously presented) The system of claim 65, said address verifier further sending to the authorized mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction, and classifying the e-mail address as indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and the second test transaction.

73. (currently amended) An article of manufacture for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: determining whether the sender address exists at an authorized mailhost for a domain of the sender address without sending an electronic mail message to the sender address, and accepting the electronic message if the sender address exists.

74. (previously presented) The article of manufacture of claim 73, further comprising the step of not accepting the electronic message if the sender address is determined not to exist.

75. (currently amended) The article of manufacture of claim 73, further comprising the step of establishing a test protocol connection to an authorized mailhost for the sender address, sending a test transaction specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and determining if the authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the sender address as a recipient.

76. (canceled)

77. (canceled)

78. (previously presented) An article of manufacture for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium

having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: sending to the remote host a transaction that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin, monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the transaction, and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the transaction.

79. (previously presented) The article of manufacture of claim 78, further comprising the step of accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the transaction.

80. (previously presented) An article of manufacture for verifying an e-mail address having a domain, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: sending a first test transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the domain, and classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

81. (previously presented) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

82. (previously presented) The article of manufacture of claim 80, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

83. (previously presented) The article of manufacture of claim 80, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain.

Serial No.: 09/548,322
Atty. Docket No.: 110768.00102

84. (previously presented) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising the step of not accepting messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

85. (previously presented) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising sending to the authorized mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction, and classifying the e-mail address as indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and the second test transaction.

86. (New) The method of claim 45, wherein said test protocol transaction includes a simple mail transfer protocol MAIL command and a simple mail transfer protocol RCPT command.

87. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein the MAIL From command specifies a complete e-mail address in the local domain.

88. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein the MAIL From command specifies the null address "<>".

89. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein said determination is made based upon the authorized mailhost's numeric response to the RCPT command.

90. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein said determination is made based upon the authorized mailhost's numeric response to a DATA command.

Serial No.: 09/548,322
Atty. Docket No.: 110768.00102

91. (New) A method for selectively blocking an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the method comprising sending a first test transaction specifying the sender address to an authorized mailhost for the domain without sending an electronic mail message back to the sender, and blocking the message if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

92. (New) The method of claim 91, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

93. (New) The method of claim 91, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain.

94. (New) The method of claim 91, further comprising sending to the authorized mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, and accepting the electronic message if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction.

95. (New) The method of claim 94, further comprising neither blocking nor accepting the message if the authorized mailhost accepts both the first and second test transactions.

96. (New) The method of claim 95, further comprising a message quarantine, and storing the message in said quarantine if the authorized mailhost accepts both the first and second test transactions.